



LEGISLATIVE OFFICE

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COMMITTEES

AGRICULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES
CALENDAR AND RULES
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

House of Representatives

State of Tennessee

MIKE STEWART
CHAIRMAN
DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

52ND LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT
DAVIDSON COUNTY

Chairman Daniel,

We are writing to request that you invite Commissioner Stuart McWhorter, Department of Finance and Administration and Commissioner Bob Rolfe, Department of Economic and Community Development to appear before the Joint Government Operations Committee on November 17, 2019 during the afternoon Rule Review. The purpose is to gather information on the \$4 million fund included in the Department of Economic and Community Development's budget that was first reported on by the Tennessean in early October ("How did \$4 million for local grants make it into Tennessee's state budget? Top lawmakers want answers," October 1, 2019).

In this same article, House Speaker Cameron Sexton called the lack of information about this fund "troubling", noting that he had not been made aware of this fund until late July and that his office was "gathering additional information on this troubling issue." In the same vein, Lieutenant Governor Randy McNally stated that he "does not want to use any of the money in the fund for 'legislative pork projects.'" Since the Government Operations Committee will be charged with approving rules regarding this fund, it's imperative that the Commissioners come before our committee and answer questions so we can fully understand the purpose of this fund.

Specifically, we would like answers to the following questions from each Commissioner:

1. On what date did each Commissioner become aware of the \$4 million fund? Who first contacted each Commissioner about it? What was each Commissioner's understanding of the purpose of this fund (the rural grant appropriation)?
2. Who requested the creation of the fund?
3. Have any grants been requested, considered, or approved? If so, who made the requests and for which projects? Is there a list or other document that you've seen that contains this information?
4. Were any documents created by, reviewed, or received by any member of this Administration regarding these grants? If so, please submit those documents in advance to Chairman Daniel for distribution to Government Operations Committee members for review.
5. What reason was given for this funding request appearing in this year's bill but not last year's?
6. What reason was given for the request for an additional \$1 million?



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We thank you for your consideration of our request and look forward to having the opportunity to find out additional information this issue.

Sincerely,

Chairman Mike Stewart

Representative G.A. Hardaway, Sr.

Leader Karen Camper

Representative Gloria Johnson

Representative Bo Mitchell

Senator Sara Kyle